

Legislative Issue Brief – Collective Bargaining



Catawba County Board of Commissioner's Legislative Goal

Oppose efforts to require collective bargaining for public or private employees

Background

Congress has made several attempts to preempt state law and impose collective bargaining in North Carolina for both public and private employees. If attempts to impose collective bargaining are successful, the results will be damaging for both local governments and economic development efforts for private industry.

In addition to efforts to force unions for private industry, there have been several Congressional attempts to require local governments to implement collective bargaining for public employees. In December 2007, Congress attempted to amend the Farm Bill to include S 2123, the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007." In July 2007, the House of Representatives passed HR 980, a mandatory collective bargaining bill, by a margin of 314-97.

In January 2009, the Public Employee Cooperation Act was introduced in Congress (House Bill 410/Senate Bill 1611). The Bill would provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivision (local governments). The ability to engage in collective bargaining, as defined in this Bill, would be made available to law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical services personnel.

In March 2009, the Employee Free Choice Act was introduced in Congress (House Bill 560/Senate Bill 1409). Commonly known as "The Card Check Bill", this legislation would do away with the current requirements that a union be certified through a federally-supervised secret ballot election. Instead, the union would be certified the moment it collected a majority of signed authorization cards. The Card Check Bill would therefore eliminate the campaign period and the legal requirements that regulate it, not to mention eliminating the ability of employees to make an informed decision in private.

The implementation of collective bargaining for public employees will take away state's rights and North Carolina's status as an "employment at will" state. Implementation of collective bargaining for public employees will create a political atmosphere in the workplace, and will seriously degrade the professional nature of hiring and service delivery. The requirements set forth in collective bargaining will add tremendous costs to the personnel functions of local government, which could ultimately lead to property tax increases. Implementation of collective bargaining will introduce an adversarial relationship between elected officials, local government county/city managers and other staff. Catawba County has enjoyed a positive working environment and culture where everyone works together for the good of the public.

On April 12, 2010, US Senate Bill 3194 was introduced. This Bill is cited as the Public Safety Employee-Employer Cooperation Act of 2009 and is similar to House Resolution 413. Catawba County remains strongly opposed to any bill that would force collective bargaining on local jurisdictions.

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